

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

RSR-01 EA-11 NEA-10 /112 W
----- 129989

R 221533 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9795

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

C O N F I D E N T I A L S STOCKHOLM 1012

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SW

SUBJECT: ANALYSIS OF SPRING RIKSDAG DEBATE AS FOREIGN POLICY

REF: STOCKHOLM 993

BEGIN SUMMARY . SHARP MODERATE (CONSERVATIVE) PARTY ATTACK ON
PALME " ACTIVE" FOREIGN POLICY AS DANGEROUS TO SWEDEN' S NATIONAL
INTEREST UPSET GOVERNMENT HOPES THAT SPRING RIKSDAG DEBATE ON
FOREIGN POLICY WOULD BE A SORT OF RATIFICATION OF GOVERNMENT' S
COMPETENCE IN HANDLING FOREIGN POLICY. ELECTION- YEAR POLITICAL
EFFECT OF DEBATE WAS PROBABLY ABOUT A DRAW AS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT
AND OPPOSITION. GOVERNMENT EFFORT TO PUT DIALOGUE WITH U. S.
ON MORE SOBER, POSITIVE PLANE WAS MARRED BY SHARP OUTBURSTS TO
WHICH PALME WAS PROVOKED IN FAIRLY FIERY DEBATE. END SUMMARY

1. MARCH 21 FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE IN RIKSDAG WAS INTENDED BY
GOVERNMENT TO BE RELATIVELY SUPERFICIAL, NON- CONTROVERSIAL EXER-
CISE WHICH WOULD LIMN THE PALME- STYLE SWEDISH FOREIGN
POLICY (ACTIVE NEUTRALITY WITH A LEFTWARD SPIN) AS EXPRESSIVE OF
A NATIONAL CONSENSUS. FOREIGN MINISTER WICKMAN' S OPENING STATE-
MENT WAS MODERATELY WORDED AND, REGARDING SWEDISH- AMERICAN RELA-
TIONS, DESIGNED TO ACCENT THE POSTIVE AND TO REPLACE EXPLOSIVE
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RHETORIC IN WHICH SWEDISH- AMERICAN DIALOGUE HAS RECENTLY BEEN CONDUCTED WITH A SOBER, BUSINESSLIKE VOCABULARY. HOWEVER, SUBSTANCE OF WICKMAN STATEMENT (WHICH DEPARTMENT HAS) CONTAINS NO MODIFICATION WHATEVER OF PRIME MINISTER PALME'S SHARPLY ANGLED FOREIGN POLICY.

2. BY WAY OF EXAMPLE, THE ONLY ACTION ANNOUNCEMENT IN SPEECH WAS DECISION TO RECOGNIZE DPRK AT COST, IF NECESSARY, OF SWEDEN'S STATUS AS A NEUTRAL NATION IN KOREA CONTEXT. MOREOVER, PASSAGE ON TERRORISM CLEARLY SIGNALS THAT GOS WILL INSIST ON APPLYING POLITICAL YARDSTICK TO ANY SITUATION INVOLVING TERRORISM; IF THE CAUSE BE GOOD, SWEDEN CLEARLY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO UNDERSTAND AND EVEN CONDONE RESORT TO VIOLENCE. PASSAGE ON INDOCHINA RE-STATES IN RESTRAINED TERMS THE FAMILIAR PALME ANALYSIS OF CAUSES AND ISSUES IN THAT CONFLICT AND SERVES NOTICE THAT GOS WILL BE BACK TO THE PROPAGANDA BARRICADES IF IT JUDGES THAT U. S. OR RVN INFRINGES THE RIGHTS OF HANOI SIDE.

3. THANKS TO MODERATE (CONSERVATIVE) PARTY LEADER GOSTA BOHMAN, GOVERNMENT'S SCENARIO FOR SPRING FOREIGN- POLICY DEBATE WAS UPSET. BOHMAN LAUNCHED A STINGING ATTACK ON PALME FOREIGN POLICY AT PERHAPS ONLY POINT WHERE IT IS VULNERABLE IN CLIMATE OF 1973. HIS THESIS WAS THAT BY " PROVOCATIVE" (NOT JUST " ACTIVE") CONDUCT OF AFFAIRS GOVERNMENT HAS SACRIFICED CREDIBILITY OF SWEDEN'S NEUTRALITY POLICY, DAMAGED THE NATIONAL INTEREST AND PERHAPS ALSO THE NATIONAL SECURITY.

4. BOHMAN AVOIDED CHALLENGING THE SUBSTANCE OF GOVERNMENT FOREIGN POLICY, ON VIETNAM OR ANY OTHER SPECIFIC ISSUE. HE FOCUSED INSTEAD ON CONSEQUENCES THAT PALME'S " EXCESSES" OF LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOR HAD VISITED UPON SWEDEN, USING STATUS OF US- SWEDISH RELATIONS AS GLARING EXAMPLE. LIBERAL LEADER HELEN AND CENTER LEADER FALLDIN ENDORSED BASIC GOVERNMENT POLICY ON VIETNAM AND ON ITS DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH U. S. THEY ABJURED ANY CRITICISM OF BOHMAN AND EVEN JOINED - MILDLY - IN HIS ATTACK ON PALME'S STYLE.

5. WICKMAN WAS NOT IMPRESSIVE IN DEFENDING GOVERNMENT POSITION, AND PALME TOOK OVER THE DEFENSE MIDWAY IN DEBATE. HIS RESPONSE WAS A MIXTURE OF DEMAGOGY (IMPLYING THAT MODERATE PARTY IS AN INSTRUMENT OF U. S. POLICY IN SWEDEN AND EXPLAINING HIS DECEMBER 23 STATEMENT AS OUTBURST OF HOLY ANGER ARISING FROM KNOWLEDGE OF

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THOUSANDS OF INNOCENTS DYING DAILY) AND ASTUTE DEFENSE OF HIS CONDUCT AND HIS " ACTIVE" POLICY OF NEUTRALITY.

6. THE ESSENCE OF THE LATTER IS AS FOLLOWS: IN THIS WORLD OF SUPERPOWERS EVERY SMALL NATION IS THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION OR LOSS OF LIBERTY. EVERY SMALL COUNTRY MUST STAND UP FOR A THREATENED BROTHER NATION BECAUSE IT MAY BE NEXT. THE DEFENSE OF SWEDEN BEGINS IN HANOI, IN SANTIAGO AND IN PRAGUE.

7. COMMENT: IN EMBASSY' S JUDGMENT RIKSDAG FOREIGN- POLICY DEBATE CAME OUT ON BALANCE AS DISAPPOINTMENT FOR GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAD HOPED IT WOULD STRENGTHEN ITS CASE WITH VOTERS WHO WILL DECIDE IN SEPTEMBER WHETHER SOCDEM GOVERNMENT DESERVES RENEWED MANDATE.

DEBATE PROBABLY TURNED OUT ABOUT A DRAW BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION IN TERMS OF POLITICAL EFFECT. IT SHOULD FURTHER BE NOTED THAT DEBATE WAS WIPED OUT OF BANNER HEADLINES TODAY OTHER POLITICAL STORIES - CHURCH- STATE RELATIONS AND GOVERNMENT MOVE TO BUY PRIVATE- INDUSTRY SHARES (SEE SEPTELS). THE MORAL HERE IS THAT FOREIGN- POLICY IS NOT A PIVOTAL ISSUE IN THIS POLITICAL YEAR.

IN TERMS OF IMMEDIATE FUTURE OF U. S.- SWEDISH RELATIONS, PALME WAS GOADED INTO REPEATING THE SAME UNACCEPTABLE WORDS WICKMAN HAD HOPED TO BURY IN THE PAST. THE CONSEQUENCE: PERHAPS TO THE DESPAIR OF MFA PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER WELL- INTENTIONED SWEDES, GOS IS ABOUT WHERE IT WAS LAST DECEMBER 24 AFTER DELIVERY OF PALME MESSAGE.
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